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International Press Service

Ressort: Mixed News

Venice presents its Maria 2026: Martine Diop Bullo shines

Italy-Venice, 19.02.2026 [ENA]

With a radiant smile and a costume blending myth and Venetian tradition, Martine Diop Bullo greeted the crowds on the final day of the Venice Carnival, embodying the spirit of an event that bridges history, beauty, and community while celebrating its timeless charm, cultural legacy and shared joy.

Martine, a Digital Management student at Ca' Foscari University, earned the title of Maria of the Year 2026 during the prestigious Gran Gala at La Fenice's Apollinee Halls. On February 17, she glided along the Grand Canal in a gondola before stepping onto the stage in St. Mark's Square, welcomed by the other Marie and Giovanni Giusto, the city's Delegate for the Protection of Traditions. Her appearance marked one of the most anticipated rituals of the Carnival, a moment where elegance and heritage meet, reaffirming the emotional power of a celebration that continues to unite generations and preserve Venice's living identity.

Giusto emphasized the symbolic weight of the ceremony, describing the Festa delle Marie as a celebration of continuity and identity. He highlighted how these young women embody the grace and resilience of Venice, renewing a centuries-old tradition that remains central to the city's cultural fabric. Preserving such rituals, he noted, ensures that the Carnival continues to thrive as a living expression of community and shared memory. He also underlined how the event strengthens the bond between citizens and their heritage, offering younger generations a tangible connection to the values, stories, and artistry that define Venetian culture. In this way, the Festa delle Marie becomes not only a tribute to the past but a promise for the future.

Martine's costume, crafted by Francesco Briggi of Atelier Pietro Longhi, paid homage to the 2026 theme, "Olympus – At the Origins of Play." The gown's pale tones recalled classical sculpture, merging Greco-Roman imagery with Venetian theatricality. Silk panels evoking the strings of a lyre, red fringes inspired by ancient armor, and Rubelli's refined "Lyra" fabric created a visual dialogue between antiquity and the Baroque imagination. The ensemble captured the essence of a city where myth and artistry naturally intertwine, highlighting the meticulous craftsmanship and symbolic depth that define Venice's most cherished traditions.

The bodice, shaped in Renaissance style and adorned with golden floral motifs, was paired with a white silk drape lined in deep red taffeta, falling from her shoulder like a stage curtain. Completing the look, a

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classical helmet embellished with gold details and Swarovski crystals supported a miniature tableau of the "Forze d'Ercole," with seven tiny figures forming a human pyramid. At the top, a small red flag symbolized courage and triumph, echoing the spirit of Venetian regattas. The entire ensemble revealed an extraordinary level of craftsmanship, turning Martine into a living emblem of the Carnival's artistry and its enduring dialogue between history and imagination.

Sharing the stage with Martine were Azzurra Galvan, elected Maria del Gazzettino by readers of the historic newspaper, and the other ten finalists who accompanied her throughout the Carnival journey. The ceremony reached an emotional peak when baritone Raffaello Bellavista performed "Maria" by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, offering a musical tribute that resonated across the square and moved the audience. The atmosphere grew even more heartfelt as the crowd embraced the moment, recognizing in these young women the living continuity of a tradition that still unites Venice through beauty, pride, and shared celebration.

The Venice Carnival, organized by the City of Venice and Vela Spa, once again proved its ability to unite spectacle, culture, and identity. The Festa delle Marie remains one of its most heartfelt traditions, a bridge between past and future where beauty becomes storytelling and heritage becomes shared experience. Each edition renews the bond between the city and its people, reaffirming Venice as a place where rituals are not merely preserved but lived. This enduring vitality shows how the Carnival continues to evolve while honoring its roots, offering moments that strengthen community pride and collective memory.

Visibly touched, Martine thanked the city with sincere and simple words, expressing her gratitude for being part of such a meaningful moment. Her message reflected the essence of the Carnival: honoring history, embracing the present, and looking toward the future with confidence. Her presence, poised yet emotional, reminded everyone that the Carnival is not only a celebration but a living narrative shaped by those who participate in it. Her heartfelt sincerity added depth to the ceremony, reinforcing the sense of unity and shared purpose that defines Venice during its most iconic festival.

This year's edition also highlighted the growing international resonance of the Festa delle Marie. Visitors from around the world gathered to witness the ceremony, demonstrating how Venetian traditions continue to inspire global fascination. The event's ability to blend authenticity with contemporary appeal reinforces its role as a cultural ambassador for the city. This global attention not only elevates the prestige of the celebration but also strengthens Venice's commitment to sharing its heritage with new audiences, ensuring that the values and stories behind the Carnival remain vibrant and relevant in an ever-changing world.

As the lights of St. Mark's Square dimmed and the final notes of the celebration faded, the 2026 Carnival left behind a renewed sense of unity and pride. Martine's coronation became a symbol of continuity,

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showing how Venice's heritage remains vibrant thanks to the people who carry it forward. The full program and updates are available on the official website and social channels of the Venice Carnival. To further enrich this account, a short video featuring the winner's interview is available just below the article at the following link:
https://www.gidiferroteam.org/venezia-presenta-la-sua-maria-2026-martine-diop-bullo-illumina-piazza-san-marco/32764

Bericht online lesen:
https://mariobonesi.en-a.eu/mixed_news/venice_presents_its_maria_2026_martine_diop_bullo_shines_-93075/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:
V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Mario Bonesi

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